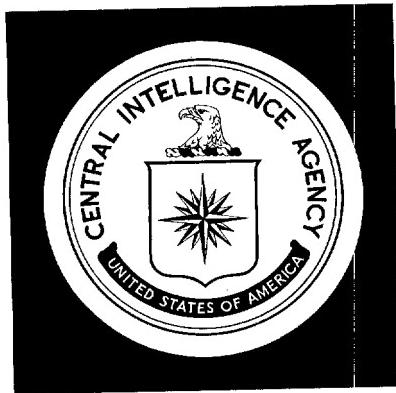


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FINLAND: Communists participate in bargaining for
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FINLAND: The Communists are participating in negotiations that began on 11 January to form a new left-center government.

They last participated in the government from July 1970 to March 1971, but dropped out when party infighting convinced the party's liberal leadership that its hold would be jeopardized if it accepted responsibility for the government's economic policies.

President Kekkonen, who is taking a direct hand in putting together a government, wants to reconstitute the previous five-party coalition including the Communists

He probably believes that this would facilitate relations with Moscow and that the party is less a threat in the government than out. In order to succeed, he needs to resolve the dispute between the Social Democrats and the Center Party over agricultural subsidies--the issue that brought down the last government. The Social Democrats may be more agreeable generally if the Communists, their rivals for votes on the left, can be persuaded again to accept governmental responsibility. Kekkonen plans to give the Social Democrats the prime minister's post, previously held by the Center Party, in recognition of Social Democratic gains in the election on 2-3 January.

Communist Party liberals did much better than their conservative rivals in the party in recent trade union elections and in the national election, and thus probably feel more secure than some months ago. Nevertheless, they face a party congress early this year and will not join the government unless the conservatives agree

The other four parties now negotiating have a parliamentary majority without the Communists.

Kekkonen wants a new government by the first week of February, presumably so it can make the decisions necessary to renew the country's economic

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stabilization program and so his hand will be stronger if, as rumored, he visits Moscow in February. The contentiousness of the issues and the complexity of the political scene, however, suggest that the present non-political government may have to continue in office for some time.

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